

**TRANSPORTATION PERMIT EFFICIENCY  
AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE (TPEAC)**

**Highlights from the Thirtieth Meeting**

Squalicum Boathouse, Squalicum Harbor  
Port of Bellingham, WA

**June 21-22, 2005**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT**

*VOTING*

Senator Dan Swecker, Senate Republican Caucus

\* Senator Phil Rockefeller, Senate Democratic Caucus

Representative Dave Upthegrove, House Democratic Caucus

Representative Doug Ericksen, House Republican Caucus

Megan White, Washington State Department of Transportation

Peter Birch for Greg Hueckel, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife

Jackie White for Joan McBride, Association of Washington Cities

Maureen Morris for Scott Merriman, Washington Association of Counties

Scott Boettcher for Gordon White, Washington State Department of Ecology

*NON-VOTING*

\* Dan Dixon, Consulting Engineers Council of Washington

Christine Golightly, Columbia Inter-Tribal Fish Commission

\* Mike Grady, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/NOAA Fisheries

Darrell Phare, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission

\* Ann Aagaard, Statewide Environmental Group

Rick Slunaker, Association General Contractors of Washington

Bryan Flett, Upper Columbia United Tribes

\* Grant Nelson, Association of Washington Business

\* Dave Johnson, Washington State Building and Construction Trades Council

*INVITED*

\* Muffy Walker for Tom Mueller, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Sharon Love for Dan Mathis, Federal Highway Administration

Tom Eaton, Environmental Protection Agency

\* Denotes no representative in attendance

For more information on many of the presentations at the meeting, please visit TPEAC online at

[http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/environment/streamlineact/TPEAC\\_schedule.htm#Highlights](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/environment/streamlineact/TPEAC_schedule.htm#Highlights)

## **AGENDA ITEM**

### **1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Senator Swecker convened the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

Senator Swecker introduced legislators, invited local officials, TPEAC members, TPEAC staff, and other guests.

#### **Welcome and Opening Remarks**

Pete Kremen, Whatcom County Executive, and Jack Louws, Mayor of Lynden, thanked TPEAC for the opportunity to attend the meeting and to communicate the needs of Whatcom County. Both Pete and Jack are impressed with the goals of the committee and look forward to future projects.

### **2. MARCH 23, 2005, MEETING SUMMARY APPROVAL**

The previous meeting summary was approved as written.

### **3. REGIONAL FISHERIES ENHANCEMENT GROUPS**

Sheila North, Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups (RFEGs), and Rich Bowers, Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Group (NSEA), talked about the status of the TPEAC-funded RFEG Pilot Study. The RFEGs completed a site prioritization process that is being used and tested in six different areas of the state to generate mitigation project lists that can be used by the RFEGs and WSDOT. NSEA is working on developing a list of potential restoration/mitigation projects that could be used by WSDOT in WRIA 1. Rich and Sheila talked about the SR- 539 Project and how it will benefit salmon enhancement and how the partnership brings expertise and the group looked forward to a future of salmon restoration.

### **4. WHATCOM COUNTY PROJECT OVERVIEW**

Hal Hart, Whatcom County Planning Director, noted that the environmental permitting process for capitol projects in Washington State has become increasingly complex. Regulatory agencies are challenged to protect vulnerable resources, including wetlands, potable water supplies, threatened salmon stocks, and water bodies such as Hood Canal and Puget Sound. Meanwhile, public works and other capitol improvement projects are devoting more time and money to the tasks of assessing impacts and designing mitigation for their projects at a time when public dollars for transportation and other infrastructure are in high demand.

Whatcom County is conducting a landscape-scale assessment of ecosystem processes to support development of the County's new shoreline master program. This landscape analysis examines key watershed processes such as the movement of water, sediment,

heat/light, and nutrients across the landscape. Whatcom County is identifying key processes within the landscape that are critical to aquatic resources -- mapping areas on the landscape that are important to the operation and maintenance of these processes, assessing how these processes have been altered by human activity, and determining restoration and management needs for each watershed.

With increasing growth occurring in the north and the 2010 Winter Olympics approaching, a large impact will be felt by Whatcom County. Wetland mitigation, maintaining the purchase of land for natural resources, updating environmental planning, and development of planning and reinvesting in smaller towns are just a few areas that Whatcom County personnel are currently working on. A “one-stop shop” at the county will open next week for city and county permits. The front desk will have an experienced person to help with the permit process and provide the ability to check on the permit process through software.

## **5. WSDOT Project Overview of State Route-539**

Marco Foster and Martin Palmer, both of WSDOT, presented an overview of the SR-539 Project. The project will increase safety, improve freight movement, and relieve congestion by widening more than six miles of Guide Meridian Road (SR-539) north of Bellingham- between Ten Mile Road and Badger Road- from two lanes to four. . WSDOT also plans to build roundabouts at six key intersections. The project will also separate north and southbound traffic with a median except through Lynden, where we will extend the two-way left turn lane.

Due to the 2003 Transportation Funding Package, the project schedule was accelerated and will be completed before the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver, British Columbia.

Martin talked about partnership and the value in working with other agencies to bring a project to completion. Agencies coordinate on all issues that may come up to find a resolution. Martin described some of the anticipated environmental impacts of the project, such as wetland and other aquatic impacts, and crossing the Nooksack River. WSDOT has solicited the Lummi and Nooksack Tribes on this project for their input. Martin described the Multi-Agency Permit Team (MAP Team) process and introduced Kim Harper from the Department of Ecology. Kim described the MAP Team’s early involvement in the SR-539 Project. WSDOT’s unique involvement on the MAP Team has helped to give it a more successful approach. The MAP Team has open communication with counties throughout the area and local jurisdictions are involved in determining project impacts to businesses.

## **6. SR 539 Pilot Project**

County Public Works and Planning representatives presented information on this project. The goal was to use information from existing local watershed plans to identify and recommend off-site mitigation for expected project impacts. Bruce Roll, Whatcom County Public Works, explained the pilot project and the process. Margaret Clancy, Parametrix, talked about landscape analysis, including mitigation and watershed areas. She looks for indicators to determine if restoration is needed, and also maintains

hydrology. Restoration opportunities lead to mitigation banking opportunities and water quality improvements.

## **7. Local Government-Watershed –Mitigation Template**

Rick Anderson reported on the work of cities and counties to integrate land use and watershed plans. A handout was provided that covered Whatcom County-wide planning efforts. It included: WRIA 1 Watershed Management Plan, Shoreline Master Program Update, Bertrand Creek CIDMP, Critical Areas Ordinance Update, Salmon Recovery Plan, and GMA Comprehensive Plan.

## **8. Tribal Government**

Darrell Phare welcomed everyone and introduced the other tribal members in attendance. Darrell talked about some of the lessons learned from TPEAC. He mentioned that the TPEAC Watershed Subcommittee was working on action items for implementing the watershed approach, including an action item about including information from the Tribes. The action item states: “Support Inclusion of Tribal Priorities, Information, and Restoration Opportunities into Locally Developed Restoration Datasets”. The Tribes will continue working on this action item. Darrell talked about the sensitivity of tribal lands and how training is necessary for a complete understanding. He also noted some concerns the Tribes have with TPEAC, including the programmatic permits and WSDOT’s selection and use of consultants. Darrell provided an update on some of the work of Megan Beeby, WSDOT Tribal Liaison to the Environmental Services Office. Megan has been meeting with each of the Tribes to determine their organizational structure and to update maps outlining areas of tribal responsibility. She is also reviewing permits that the Tribes have.

Darrell opened up meeting to the other tribal members in attendance:

Randy Kindly, Lummi Tribe, would like for the government understand that his Tribe has experts in all areas of mitigation. Randy would like to update SR 539 with tribal concerns. He would like to be involved in the planning of the projects and work with TPEAC to ensure a partnership with the quality of the land.

Herman Williams, Tulalip Tribe, noted the Tribes have come a long way in being involved. Tribes want to be involved in the front end rather than the back end. Herman pointed out that we are all trying to save and restore salmon. WSDOT sends out a lot of papers and letters, but they need more meaningful dialogue with the Tribes. Tribes want to be involved in the beginning of a project. More and more artifacts and cultural items are being found and meaningful dialogue needs to take place. Salmon management is also a big concern.

Larry Wasserman, Skagit River Co-op, spoke for two Skagit Tribes. Skagit Tribes want to be involved in the permit process and need to have meaningful input on projects.

Funding is available to deal with individual project reviews but not to deal with large initiatives. He also mentioned the importance of having individual interaction with each Tribe because each has individual needs and interests.

George Lee, Yakama Nation, expressed his concern about the streamlining of the permit process. He wants to see cooperation between TPEAC and the Tribes. In general, the Tribes agree that they would like more interaction with the permitting process and communication with salmon management, mitigation policies, and projects.

Brian Flett, from the Spokane Tribe and TPEAC Tribal Liaison, said that messages from the Tribes are consistent throughout the state and that the Eastside Tribes have the same concerns as those expressed by other Tribes at the meeting. Early consultation with Tribes is extremely important and cannot be stressed enough. The Tribes are not necessarily opposed to streamlining if it's done right. They want and need to get things done quickly, too. We need to understand some of the limitations the Tribes have. Funding limitations often prevent them from participating in things that they want to do. Tribes follow a moral authority and put protections of natural resources first. Senator Swecker asked about the selection of consultants and why this was an issue for the Tribes. Darrel explained that the Tribes do not consider the consultants as WSDOT staff, and that the consultants may not have the same level of trust from the Tribes or interests as WSDOT does.

## **9. TPEAC Website**

Scott Boetcher and Molly Arrandale.

Molly Arrandale, TPEAC communications intern, presented an overview of her work to date and asked attendees to provide her with feedback to shape her next steps. Molly is working for Scott Boettcher at the Department of Ecology. She is developing a website presenting a case study of the TPEAC experience. Since starting in early May, she has spoken with past and current TPEAC participants to gain a sense of the committee's origins, evolution, and accomplishments. At the presentation, a CD containing an introductory piece about her work to date was handed out to meeting participants. The disk contained information about: the project objectives, a work plan, a list of conversations she's had with people she's interviewed regarding TPEAC, and a timeline of events relevant to TPEAC, coupled with a background piece aiming to capture the story behind the committee's creation. Molly would appreciate comments, corrections, and/or additions to these first attempts from those interested in this project.

Molly presented a mock-up of the website that she has been working on displaying her tentative organizational structure. The website will potentially be located within the Office of Regulatory Assistance's website as part of a "Spotlighting Series". The site's organization would center on five content "buckets":

- About TPEAC, which would contain background information explaining the need for TPEAC, identifying its members, purpose, etc.
- Process, to capture the committee's structure, chronology, and effective collaboration;
- Products, to highlight successful and innovative outcomes;

- Lessons Learned, which would contain an honest account of the committee's missteps and less successful outcomes; and
- Practitioner's Corner, a resource for audiences interested in applying the TPEAC experience to their own efforts.

Following the presentation, committee members and participants raised questions and made suggestions to help refine Molly's future work. Several key issues raised included the need for links to active sites as a means of providing viewers access to current efforts; text describing the intent and contents of each bucket when the viewer links to that page; and the use of graphics to demonstrate concepts and to help draw the viewer in. Molly distributed a PDF of the website mock-up for review and comments from meeting participants.

#### **10. Tour Logistics**

Carrie Berry and Julie Ruster provided a schedule of events for the dinner and bus tour of SR 539.

They include the following:

- SR 539 Ten Mile to Badger Road Project
- Guide Meridian (SR 539) to the City of Lynden
- Wiser Lake
- Schneider Ditch site
- East-Hemi Site

#### **11. Closing and Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.